

Sermon Summaries: Law, Gospel and the Glory of God.

Preached on 3/3/2019 by Angus Fisher- Acts 15:1-11, Gal 1:11-16, 2:1-5

To begin and introduce the sermon, a couple of pages of verses in the NT were read through all relating to the law, which show that it is irrational and delusional even to consider that believers are in some sense under the law, when the whole of the NT so clearly and emphatically declares that Salvation is by Grace, through the redemptive work of Christ, and by faith therein, completely apart from the works of the Law, but freely bestowed upon chosen sinners through the promised gift of the Holy Ghost. And so it was observed that at the Heart of this issue, that is, to preach that the Law is in any way necessary to salvation, to whatever degree, is to steal the Glory due unto God and our Saviour; the Glory of God the Father in choosing a people to be redeemed by Christ, the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in redeeming His people by His own blood, and the Glory of the blessed Holy Spirit in the work of regenerating those that are Chosen by the Father and redeemed by the Son. For if you believe that you have any part in salvation, by your own will, strength and or works, you are denying all that is above mentioned, that Salvation is of the LORD, and are exalting your own works above that of Gods; For if it is by Grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is nor more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work (Rom 11:6). And so the main theme of this message, and that which it addresses, is this heresy that the observance of the Law is in some way necessary to Salvation, and particularly that of Circumcision in this account which brought about the council of the Apostles and the elders in Jerusalem for the first time.

Now this heresy was brought in by so called “brethren” who would have professed faith in Jesus, that He is the Christ, and Saviour of His people (Acts 15:5, Gal 2:4); and so it was observed that before this point in time there was no recorded opposition to the Gospel of Grace from within the Church itself, but that all opposition had previously come from without, and primarily from the religious Jews, especially them of the Pharisees, who also conspired to put to death our Lord for preaching the Truth, and preforming miracles (John 5:18, 11:43), and who had in just the previous chapter of Acts, stoned Paul to death for preaching the truth (Acts 14:19). But now, after this point, the many warnings given throughout the NT writings, for the which reason the entire epistle of Jude was written, are of false teachers; men arising up from within the Church itself, speaking Perverse things and leading disciples away after themselves (Acts 20:30). They are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; ministers of Satan who are transformed as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:13-14). It was also observed that these false brethren were brought in “unawares”, and so even to the Apostles and elders they appeared at first to be true believers, but in time they were exposed for what they truly were, as always does the truth of the Gospel expose all falsehood, as also the Scriptures say “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Cor 11:19). And so it was stated, in considering the fact that heresy and error is to arise from within the Church itself, that the worst heresies of all are those which are seemingly closet to the truth, and so all the more subtle in deceiving weak minds.

Now in considering how that this was dealt with by the Church, we looked at some verses in Gal 2 of Paul’s account of traveling up to Jerusalem, and particularly how that he went up by revelation, and communicated unto them his Gospel, which he

received from the Lord; and he did so privately amongst them who were of reputation, meaning primarily the Apostles, such as, James, Peter and John (Gal 2:2). For Paul had not a single doubt in his mind that the Gospel which he preached was the true Gospel concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, as He had received it not from man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12). And so he went up confidently and triumphantly, declaring the conversion of the gentiles (Acts 15:3-4), and not in away shaken in faith by this heresy of the false brethren; and because of Paul's confidence in the Gospel, It was observed that he took Titus up to Jerusalem with him, who was himself an uncircumcised gentile, which he did so purposefully because of the false brethren; For if Titus was forced to be circumcised, it was an evident token that the Church in Jerusalem had been deceived by these false teachers. But seeing the outcome of the council, it is evident that these false brethren stood completely apart from the apostles and the elders, for there was unanimous agreement that, both Jew and gentile alike, are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:11).

Conclusion:

That this heresy of works salvation, is none other than the subtle and deceitful workings of Satan in perverting the Word of God (2 Cor 11:13) and as time goes on, this heresy becomes more and more subtle, as it grows and permeates the whole of the “professing Christian world”.

Though this heresy of works salvation is completely irrational, and showed to be so throughout all the scriptures, it is engraved upon our fallen nature, as the first thing which Adam and eve did after disobeying the commandment of God, and thereby sinning, they “sewed fig leaves together” which was to cover their nakedness; as we in our natural state seek to establish our own righteousness, being ignorant of the righteousness of God.